

# Dialogue of Deafs Regarding Childhood in the Commune of Boudry in Burkina Faso: A Communicational Approach of the Processes in a Context of Gold Washing

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## Abstract

Gold washing of children constitutes as much a social problem, as a problem of development in Burkina Faso, a country which knows these last years a mining boom. The explaining factors of this phenomenon are to be found in the poverty of the populations in rural areas, in the imitation of the children to look like their friends and elders, and in the psychosocial factors. A dialogue of the deaf characterizes the relationship of the populations to childhood and make an arbitration between the obligation of going to school, and the opportunity that gold washing brings out to some families to change their social situation. Responsibilities are shared between children, persons in charge of holes in gold washing sites, parents and the government. The covering of this problem is ensured by endogenous processes through which the teachers invent strategies of retention of children to school. An association echoes about the general problem of childhood, by strengthening the raising of awareness. The results show that challenges regarding communication are many. For that reason, they deserve that a communicational approach be built through the formalization of a dialogue framework around gold washing of children. That would allow to avoid to all the stakeholders to maintain the communicational hiatus around childhood. The consideration of scientific information would contribute to increase the possibilities of catching the politics' attention for any decision-making, for the benefit of childhood.

**Keywords:** gold washing, childhood, communication, development

## Introduction

In Burkina Faso, mining resources play a determinant role in the economy of the country. In 2012, extractive industries have represented 11.8% of the GDP against an average of less than 1% between 2000 and 2008. In spite a bad farming campaign in 2011, the important production of gold raised the economy for 5%. This dynamism of the sector enabled since 2009 to raise gold at the level of first exportation product of the country [MEF, 2013]. This referential document underlines the position of mining resources in the economy of Burkina Faso. As for gold washing, it is considered as a necessary evil, because, considering that nowadays this sector is booming, if we take into consideration people who are directly implicated in gold washing, and bordering people who can get benefit from it, we estimate 1.3 millions of people in Burkina Faso getting an income throughout this activity of gold washing [PNUD-PNUE, 2011].

Indeed, many studies insist on the contribution of mining resources, gold specifically in the economy of developing countries, such as South Africa, Congo, Senegal, or Mali or Ghana, etc. Socio-economic studies have been led, focused on the analysis of gold exploitation in different countries in Africa [Samaba, 2013 ; GADHOP, 2013 ; MEF, 2013]. The interest of most of those studies are on traditional mining and the modalities of their use [Keita, 2002; Samba, 2013]. Some are on the poverty [MECV, 2011], conflicts and consequences generated by the traditional exploitation of gold. Giving the new face of traditional exploitation of gold in Congo, Carisch Enrico [...] shows that gold helps in stirring up and reinforcing murderous conflicts in this part of the world. Between populations' conflicts, environmental, socioeconomic and sanitary consequences [MECV 2011; GADOPH 2012; MEF 2013], some studies keep the view on the work of children in gold washing. It's the case with Human Rights Watch studies [2011] showing that on the sanitary level, in Mali child labor in an environment of gold washing where mercury is used, constitutes a poisonous mixing. Others studies are in a logic of interpellation. Johannisson, analyzing child labor in Ghana and Mali, and the procurement politics in the sector of information and communication technologies, interpellates the consumer that is the international community: *the gold that is in your telephone is maybe the product of child work!* By telling so, children work is a central topic in the studies about gold washing. Regarding the place and the normal role that children should have in the society, denunciation is one of the current interpretive categories in those studies. The analysis on the young seekers of gold from Essakane [Yaro, 1996] is in a dynamism of a general context of reflection, in which the child is considered as exploited throughout oppression, getting them to work and the process of proletarianization [Schlemmer, 1996]. Palé [2012] is much categorical in speaking, telling in a newspaper that gold sucks the blood of Burkina's children. If gold washing constitutes a necessary evil in the ascendant social mobility and socio-economical change of status processes, then, the problems raised that show the arbitration logics between the work and the schooling poses a problem: the communicational hiatus of the populations regarding childhood. Has to what been childhood? What should be its role and its position in the society? What

does work mean for children and their parents? This questioning lies on the idea that there is a sort of cognitive dissonance when it is a context of gold washing, to choose between the necessities of a school attendance and the material opportunity that gold washing gives in rural area. In this approach through the cognitive dissonance, the beginning assumption says that child labor in gold washing constitutes an opportunity of ascendant social mobility for parents who use children as base for the change of socioeconomic status. For, in the opposite case, parents who are gold washers prefer the orientation of their children in others activities, that can be basically schooling rather than sending them in high risky activities as *going down in holes* [Soré, Maïga, 2015] of the local extraction of gold. The economical capital becomes one of the issues and determinant factors of the social orientation of children in gold washing area; it is getting complex in a dialogue of deaf within the actors having a diversity of interpretation and determination of the child orientation in the society. One of the challenge to take up is to understand how to express to the populations the necessities of a cognitive dissonance about childhood and its social orientation.

In this lies the interest of a research about communication processes around childhood in a context of gold washing. Speeches and practices regarding childhood, lie also on some social processes that implicate a set of communication process.

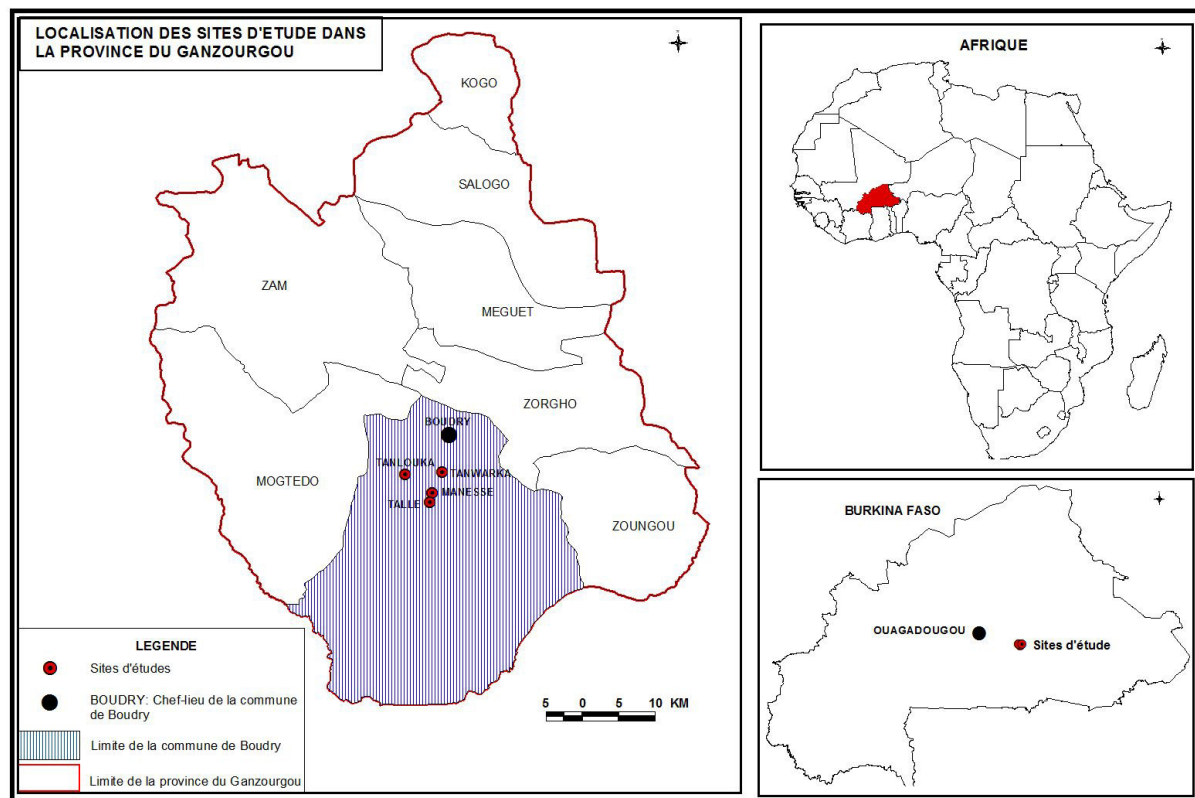
In the previous studies, solutions contemplated leafing through the diagnosis, put emphasis on the interest of communication in dealing with the main problems regarding the dropping out of pupils from school, because of gold washing. According to Soré and Maïga [2015], they should put emphasis on the necessity of a sensitizing approach insisting on the importance of the success at school and gold washing sites risks. We remind also that on the 06th of December 2013, in front of the national assembly, Koumba Boly, the Ministry in charge of national education put forward the impact of gold washing on pupils's. She observed that traditional gold mines are attractive poles of the vulnerable brands of the society namely children. This problem arouses the realization in 2009 of a survey in the North, Sahel, Central plateau, South-west and central regions. That survey, according to the Ministry, allowed to count 600 traditional mines sites exploited by a population in which 1/3 is less than 18 with pupils specifically. Therefore, in the classrooms, irregular attendances, frequent delays, physical and intellectual exhaustion scenes, drowsiness scenes are observed. In the same way, we met pupils (girls) from 11-12 years old abandoning themselves to prostitution. And as a matter of fact, some of those girls get pregnant [Paré, 2013]. The minister, through her questions "what should we do", "what can we do?" is drawing the attention of the national assembly and everybody in general, calling them to be implicated in finding solutions. Debate meetings, sensitizing and informing about the issue are some actions of the government that Koumba Boly was giving. There were also governmental visits on the concerned regions and agents from the Ministry of the security have been deployed to prevent children from coming to the sites. [Paré, 2013].

In the solutions proposed by the government, communication, by the fact that all the actions integrate communication processes, remains one of the determinant variable. The approach has to be participative and integrated. Then, what report can we do actually in the gold washing mines, namely in the commune of Boudry? If one of the challenges to take up is to ensure a communication for mentalities and behaviors change of the targeted population, the hiatus that still remains in the arbitration between gold washing and schooling constitutes a multifaceted communication problem. What are the processes implemented on the field to tackle communication problems regarding children working in gold washing? What are the capacities of the actors (public or non-public) carrying such helping projects for childhood? What are the difficulties that the actors meet in those communication processes to deal with this *dialogue of deaf* within the same actors around childhood? To answer to this questioning, the survey has been done throughout a qualitative method, with many data collection tools.

## Method

The method presents the Survey sites, the targets, the data collection techniques and the data analysis techniques.  
Survey at Boudry, a rural commune in the province of Ganzourgou

For data collection, a field survey allowed to cover many gold washing sites in the rural commune of Boudry: Tanlé, Tanwaka, Tanlouka, and Manessé. Those villages abound in traditional gold washing sites and would allow to understand the logics and the speeches about childhood, school, gold washing and the social practices in terms of schooling, the dropping out, child labour, at a village level, but also at a territorial and communal level.



Map n°1: Location of the four villages surveyed, in the commune of Boudry

In those villages, the survey has concerned about forty persons. They are pupils'parents having their children on the gold washing sites or not. The survey concerned also parents who are gold washer in order to tackle their link to school, to gold washing and to the orientation of children. The leaders of gold washing sites, gold holes leaders and any other leader about gold washing are concerned, teachers also because of their reading of local social practices. It has concerned local associations defending education for all, and that are engaged in the fight against work of children in general, and particularly of children who are gold washer. Local leaders(traditional, religious), the administrative local leaders of social service, the villages councils for development(CVD), the local political leaders,... The survey has concerned children who are gold washer, having less than 18 years old, or those who have more than 18years,but having started gold washing without getting the civil majority.

#### Qualitative techniques of data collection.

The realization of this research is based on many techniques of data collection: the documentary review and the semi directive interview. The documentary review has allowed to get the point of the previous research about the link between gold washing, the work of children and its diverse consequences, including schooling. The problem has been set with this documentary review. It allowed to more acute this problem and to better elaborate the problematic, and to include the reflection in a precise theoretical movement of communication and information sciences. The starting idea has been to investigate the way of the analysis in terms of communicational approach. The semi directive interview is used to discuss with many social categories, prioritizing on the diversity of the actors: parents, leaders of opinion at the social level, leaders of associations, local agents of decentralized structures (technical and administrative at communal level). The interviews allowed to tackle the actors' logic in the eyes of their practices, their talks about school, about gold washing, the work of children in gold washing sites, their look on the communication processes engaged in the fight against the work of children and against the dropping out, the difficulties, the strategic actors who would allow to make any action better, the strategies to implement and the communication tools to mobilize; they should justify the efficiency of their choice and their use in the social context of their future application.

#### The communicational approach to analyze data

The data collected have been firstly studied, by putting together the answers to the same questions. After this, the answers have been gathered in topics depending on the different categories got. Thoses topics have been acuted, reread and gathered to free the outline and the big conclusions. The results of the survey have been then read according to the analysis technic of the contain base on a communicational approach of the reality observed. On the methodological and epistemological plan, *the study of a phenomenon in a communicational approach, will*

*be first of all to ask oneself in what way the communicational processes intervene in this phenomenon, next it will be to try to make a point, with a comprehensive and globalizing reading based on the concepts of systemism and constructivism*<sup>1</sup> [Mucchielli, 2004 : 23]. It's this theoretical perspective that has been mobilized, going through the idea that *communication is a fundamental process by which social relationship is tied*. [De Coster, Bawin-Legros, Poncelet, 2010 : 8].

#### Results: the stakes of communication regarding a problem of society.

The results of the field survey allow to show that if gold washing of children is a problem of society, in dealing with it, it implies the stakes of communication. How does communication organize its regarding this question in the rural commune of Boudry? What is the impact of communication processes engaged in this domain? What are its limits and difficulties?

#### Burkina: Gold washing in a context of mining

Burkina Faso abounds in important mining resources [MEF, 2015] and has a real mining boom (Chilou, 2014). There are many mineralization deposits, for example gold that we can find almost everywhere in the national territory, the copper with the deposits of Gaoua; the zinc with its important deposit of massif sulphide in Perkoa. That zinc contains more 6.9millions of tons of ore, with a content estimated at 18% of zinc and 20g/ton of silver. We have also the manganese with its important deposit of Tambao, containing more than 19millions of tons of ore assaying 52% of manganese on average; granites, of which the pink granite of Pama; the dolomitic limestone, of which the deposit of Tiara; the kaolin, of which from Diékuy ; the cement limestone of which the deposit of Tin-Hassran; the phosphate. To value those resources, the government started important reforms in mining sector. It is the case with the liberalization of the sector, through the adoption of a declaration from 1996 mining policy, followed by the implementation of a mining code in 1997 that has been read again in 2003 in order to make the sector more attractive. Those reforms lead to the afflux of national and foreign investors in mining domain. By the end of December 2012, we had 9411 titles and valid authorizations in this sector, of which 665 authorizations for research against 605 authorizations at the date of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011; 11 authorizations for industrial exploitation. This number has not increased in comparison to the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011; 24 semi-mechanized authorizations of which 8 delivered in 2012, 190 authorizations for traditional exploitation, of which 14 delivered in 2012; 51 authorizations for substance quarry exploitation against 47 validated the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011 [MEF, 2015].

Regarding the authorizations for traditional exploitation, we can say that gold washing, despite its rudimentary nature remains the one the known ways of the exploitation of ore in Burkina Faso. If we add that to the authorizations of semi-mechanized exploitation, we understand the influence of gold washing in the exploitation of ore in this country, in comparison to the industrial exploitation. *Burkina Faso, more and more looks like a large site of traditional exploitation of gold for the populations who don't hesitate to engage their families, including children* (MASSN, 2011 : 68). Field surveys showed and allowed to insist on the fact that gold washing constitutes also a problem of society.

#### Gold washing, a problem of society.

Gold washing constitutes as well a problem of society, as a problem of development in Burkina Faso. This problem is characterized not only by gold washing itself, but also and particularly because it contributes negatively to the employment of children in the labor, especially the dangerous labor. The results of this survey put on evidence the presence of children on gold washing sites in the rural commune of Boudry. Many factors that are interdependent explain the presence of children on gold washing sites in that commune.

#### From the presence of children on the sites, the explicative factors.

According to the interviewees, many reasons explain the presence of children on gold washing sites. Poverty is the main reason that is a determinant factor in the race towards gold holes. In a consuming society, gold washing sites constitute attractive places [Beaudrillard, 1970] where money and what it gives as goods are the main things. In the context of gold washing, the main attraction of children is the possession of a mode of transport, let's say a motorbike. In Burkina Faso, motorbike constitutes one of the main transport mode. It favors independence in moving. But this attraction turns on with the logic of imitation of children already working in gold washing sites. Environment influence or fashion influence, all young people at a certain age dream of getting a motorbike, to be identified in his time. The speech of this young gold washer is explicit and underlies the propensity of young people to imitate: *"the reason why I am in the gold site is the motorbike because I have schoolmates who were going to school and who couldn't go with motorbike, and use bicycle; and when they see us with motorbikes, they want to do the same"*. Others actors accuse what they consider as the perverted effects of the system of continuum at school. To this, we can add what is convenient to call the perverted effects of the

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<sup>1</sup> The main concepts of systemism and constructivism are : the frame, the system, the homeostasie, the equifinality, the circular causality, the interaction rules and games, the essential advantages, the stakes, the interactions and opposite situations... ; the emergency, the dialogism, the world's view, the understanding, interpreting rules, the system of pertinence, the logic of action and situation [Mucchielli, 2004 : 22-3]



continuum. Indeed, the inclusion of the continuum in the national education system had for corollary, in rural areas, an effect of misappropriation of pupils towards gold washing sites. What is in question here, it is the insufficiency of reception infrastructures at the secondary school, while the number of arrivals from primary schools is increasing. There is a shrill imbalance between the school demand and the capacities to accept pupils at first class. In such a context, for lack of returning to the 5th year of primary school and do the examination for the entrance in first class of high school, some pupils, by complex to find themselves in the same class as their youngest brothers, prefer to take the path gold washing, an activity in which others already find themselves with more or less success.

There is the circle of acquaintances, good-companionships and the motobike. When the children go to the high school and far from the parents, they see some of their companions driving motorbikes and they want to do the same thing. There is also a phenomenon of the continuum. In the absence of places at secondary school for all those who got the primary school certificate, some refuse to come back and pass the entrance for diverse reasons. Some people do not want to come any more on benches with their youngest brothers or are more than 15 years old. (Boulsam, primary school teacher and Director of the primary school of Tanwaka for five years)

The unfavorable context constitutes a handicap for many parents to press the children and avoid them to frequent the sites of gold washing. The absence of private high schools, coupled with the dilapidated state of reception capacities of the continuum schools, does not allow to absorb the excess of pupils arriving from primary school. In the estrangement of the high schools with villages are added the material constraints as the necessity of having transport means (motorcycle or bike) to go to school, the needs for food when the pupil goes away from the family place. It is related loads which explain that some parents prefer to let children take care of themselves than creating additional responsibilities, nevertheless necessary in the pursuit of the secondary education. we are not surprised that the majority of the children on the sites of gold washing, except those who are not going to school, be pupils of the level of the secondary school, much more than those of the primary school. We find all these factors and incriminations in words of the various social categories met on the field. These factors are globally the attraction of the material needs, the imitation of friends, and the low accommodation facilities of the pupils in a context of continuum system. In other words, in the social and psychological factors, economic aspects and structural are added. What is the responsibility of the actors in this situation? How the interviewees situate the responsibilities of the actors in child labor on sites?

#### Of the responsibility of actors.

To situate the responsibilities, the interviewed, schematically designed three big categories of actors: parents, pupils, holes leaders on gold washing sites, and the government. According to the interviewed, children during the adolescence period don't respect their parents' will and are influenced by their friends, he environment. They have an excessive option of getting money quickly. Children are then situated in a tension between their self-affirmation through the expression of their identity and their freedom as adolescent, and the influence of their environment. If the responsibility of children should be situated, it should be linked closely to the responsibility of parents, leaders of children socialization, let's say of education. In other words, according to the interviewed, there is a kind of laxity of parents, marked by the collapse of social links, and the weakness of the family unit, giving profit to the pair groups, of Medias, of Communication and Information Technologies in general, and by the globalization. When there is a lack of means to continue the school of children in post-primary, some parents prefer acting as they don't see, and pretend not see that their children are deviating to job, while their compulsory school until fourth year at least is not achieved. These are economic and material factors that induce in turn the choices of children and parents, or non-choices, when we consider that parents prefer to let their children manage by themselves as they want. And why not gold washing, in consideration to what previous children have been able to accumulate as resources and goods.

What is the responsibility of the government? Except the problems related to the weakness of school infrastructures in the rural area that causes difficulties of the government to ensure a consequent education, the interviewees denounce the laxity of the government. This is characterized by the non-application of prohibited measures about child labor on gold washing sites, whatever the reasons raised. For example the government has adopted a series of measures aiming at child protection, highlighting on warning. One of those measures is the decree n°2009-369/PRES/PM/MTSS/MS/MASSN stating determination of the list of dangerous jobs forbidden to Burkina Faso children. As well, the government doesn't create enough jobs for young people, and doesn't offer them mechanisms to get production and entrepreneurship means.

*Measures that forbid the access of children to the sites until a certain age is required. A regular control should be done and those who will not respect rules should be punished. Holes leaders should recruit workers of a certain age, not children. They want labor and they exploit children because of the motorbike. (Boulsam, teacher and primary school director of Tanwaka for 5 years)*

If the laxity of the government is accused in the prohibition of child labor, those who don't respect those rules are also and particularly the holes leaders. According to the informations, they are accused to recruit minors in

order to get a cheap labor. This opportunism of holes leaders is assumed by the same leaders. Their argumentaries are verging on the irresponsibility. Their preoccupation is to get labor without asking the age or the status of the job seeker. Therefore, they are aware of the presence of pupils and minors between the workers.

We leaders of holes, we don't check if the one who is coming is a pupil or not because we are looking for workers. We, we look for workers. I had my nephews who were working with me but as school started, they went. They didn't want but i insisted because gold will finish but not school. But if they are not my nephews, I could obliged them to go back to school. As they are my nephews, I promised them things to incite them to go back to school. If it is not a child from your family as his case, you can't tell to someone who came for work to go back, because you don't know his problems. Some people come from far places and you can't do anything. If someone comes to look for money, we can't say something about that. It's true that when someone comes we ask to know where he is coming from before recruiting him. This is a matter of security and we are even able to ask that because the site is small. If the site was big, it would have been too complicated. (Malik, leader of holes, inhabitant of the site and iman of the site, Saturnin, leader of holes, Théodore, leader of holes, Manessé)

#### An arbitration problem

The raisons raised to explain the work of children are in majority poverty and the logics of a cheap labour exploitation [Schlemmer, 1996 ; Kéita, 2014] , even if going through the theoretic and empiric literature, Kéita [2014] shows that economical motivations deserve to be considered in context. His reflexion is about how poverty constitutes an arbitration between schooling and work of children in Mali. If he author concludes that there is a conceptual difficulty to measure child labour, in the eyes of approaches and different methods used in so doing, it remains that the remove from school and the dropping out [Ouali, 2013 ; Sawadogo, 2013] constitutes one of the direct consequences for children. In other words, the arbitration between child labour and schooling is due to the social contexts in which the labour raises, and the social representations in link with child labour and at school [Yaro, 2007]. A legal understanding of child labor is opposite to the right of children to education. In the rural commune of Boudry, we see that those society problems are expressed in terms of choice, under the way of an arbitration between schooling and gold washing. In a caricatural way, everybody is aware of the interest of school for children and for every professional activity. In their propos, they use to say: we know that school is better. The talks are expressive about the importance of school and unequivocally

It is not a question to ask. We all know that school is important. We know that all pupils cannot work in the administration but with your knowledge, you can do many things without any difficulties. Even trade, if you know how to read and to write, you don't suffer as others. When you can read and write, everything is easy, this is what we tell to children everyday but they don't understand. If you go to school, and you don't work in the administration, if there is money, we can finance you. The sites are closed for the industries and when they come they need young persons of the locality, and if you don't have diplomas, they won't recruit you. We know people who didn't have job with their diplomas, but who have been recruited when he got the occasion. For example the responsible of the pharmaceutical center of the health center (CSPS) of Mannessé, Kaboré Noomwendé. He was here with us, but as he had the level, when the health center pharmaceutical office has been opened, he is there. But if he hadn't diplomas, what would he do? it would have been another person from other locality and we would notice that. So we know that school is good. School is facilitating our life even in adventure. (Malick, leader of holes, inhabitant of the site and iman of the site, Saturnin, leader of hole, Théodore, leader hole, Mannessé)

Therefore, parents, including children working in gold washing sites made a choice, even if, they measure all the necessity to know in life. Beyond the imitation of friends and the attraction of material needs, the effective problems of life oblige them to do some choices. Child labor in those sites constitute a contribution for the parents who live in difficult conditions, and who say they cannot afford the school fees of their children. Therefore, with the money the young children bring from gold washing , they use that to pay the school fees of the youngest brothers stayed at the village.

Are you ready to go back to school? A child working in gold washing, with anxiety answers: "even if I want I can't because if I come back it will provoke the break of my small brothers who go to school. Their school fees and the family expenses depend on my activities in gold washing. So if I stop and come back to school, my small brothers will stop going to school by obligation"

You know we are all aware of the importance of school, and if we have means we can help the other members of the family who can't, to pay for the school fees of their children. We know that it is important for our village to have intellectuals. (group interview with youth of Talé)

This arbitration seems to be logical, if only in the future, the small brothers wouldn't go in the hills to look for gold or the money from gold. And, in this is the complexity of the question in the extent that the youngest brothers have tendency of imitating their big brothers. A kind of dependence in gold washing is created and has the tendency to recur in the time. Young gold washers even denounce classical school, considering it as being useless, because it is unhelpful to reach high school and then come to gold washing. If this is not a fail, it looks

like a fail or time wasted.

I prefer gold washing and as we not live without knowledge, i prefer koranic school to classical school because some pupils reached high school, but finally came back in the holes with us, so school is useless.

Nowadays, school doesn't give job. (group interview with young people from Talé).

We are here in a sort of cognitive dissonance, or let's say a dialogue of deaf that express the paradox in the same person of Boudry for example, who recognizes the interest of school for the child, and resigns when that child goes gold washing. The fundamental problem, undoubtedly is the scarcity of life conditions of local populations. But there is also and more the material facts, the imitation of friends and relatives, and more again a problem of representations. Those representations allow to pose the problem under a cognitive view, otherwise under the weight of the cognitive dimension about the speeches and the choices of populations in terms of children's orientation, and the taking care of childhood. The question becomes a question of mentality that getting deep as gradually, some children come back from holes with material goods and money, as gradually the weakness of the reception capacity of post-primary structures doesn't allow to satisfy the high demand for schooling in this level and as gradually the dropping out of pupils in high schools are getting numerous in the commune. This question becomes complex through the interdependence of factors, responsibilities, and then, communication becomes a necessity. How to ensure comprehension and intercomprehension by using communication in order to attenuate the implication of children in the problem of gold washing? To answer to this question, it is convenient to observe how communication, regarding the work of children in gold washing, is organized in the commune of Boudry.

#### Communication process regarding a problem of development.

Gold washing of children constitutes a real curse, a society problem. It is a matter of fact established as well by previous studies, as by the results of this survey, in the rural commune of Boudry. Despite the limits of the actions around the management of this phenomenon, some actors organize and put in place diversified strategies to assure a minimum of communication regarding the fact. At the local level, there are concrete frames which try to organize this care, by integrating communication processes. Frames exist for a communication process around the question of the future of the child in a context of gold washing proliferation. Traditional canals as the traditional chieftdom, religious and political leaders namely imans, and priests. They are opinion leaders who constitute effective means to reach of whom they are spokesmen. The field surveys also show that one of these frames of action remains the association. Actions are mainly turned towards the sensitization of populations about the misdeeds of unnatural activities regarding childhood and indirectly about activities that benefit to them, as school.

#### An association to Start

Since we are here, we had one visit of the social action that came from Ziniaré to speak to us on the places for children. They made us understand that sites are for the industrials and when they will come for the exploitation, they will need workers but if you do not know how to read and write, it will children from the other localities that will come to work in front of you. There was also "Terres des Hommes » that came but they went at the end towards the site of Poussigin. (Malik, leader of holes, inhabitant of the site and iman of the site, Saturnin, leader of holes, Théodore, leader of holes.)

When we speak about the management of problems around child labor, the interviewees always speak to the past: *there was Unicef, there was Terre Des Hommes ...* The informers evoke furtively NGOs and international organisms as to speak about the actors who contribute indirectly to the care of children working in gold washing in the commune. But apparently, we notice that the realizations stopped now. Their interventions concerned globally schooling, girls in particular and about the elimination of illiteracy. Structures ensured as well activities of sensitization about the dangers of gold washing for childhood and the impact on schooling. The decentralized structures of the social action contributed to assure the same type of activities and to strengthen the speech about the stakes of school and the problems that gold washing causes to the society. She insists especially on the capital gain (increase in value) that school could bring in terms of employability qualification level by which in the future can lead to a more decent and safe job in gold washing. But at the local level, according to the information, there are local associations or specific organized groups.

When I retired and came back home, *I set up an association which should take into account the question of the schooling and child labor, the development as such. We set up the Association Act for the Defense and Environmental protection (AADPE). At the level of this association, we make presently the alphabetization. The accent is put on women. We are 75 % of woman and 25 % of men. We set up centers with footbridge. It is a center of recycling and raising the success level and to reduce academic failure cases. On the last two years we are they respectively 75 % and 65 % of success in the GCSE(FRENCH GENERAL CERTIFICATE SECONDARY EDUCATION).* (Head of Tanwaka)

At Tanwaka, the director of the school set up a plan called "Club of Supervision» made up of pupils through the village under the supervision of the "Committee of Listening" made up of the Director, of APE Presidents and the AME. The plan intervenes in the frame the violence against girls which is sometimes cause of school

decrease. From the Club of Supervision, it is to indicate any case of violence against girls, whether they are families, on the road of school and even at the school. Committee is in charge of convening the concerned to sensitive them about the vulnerable character of the girl. The approach is an approach of direct implication of the actors in a process of sensitization. The frame of communication is a frame which adapts to the context for an inclusive communicational approach. This center assures the community mobilization around the question of literacy and the cause of girls in particular. It is then a question on a gradual plan. In all the districts of the village, it exists districts leaders, intermediary between the populations and the center, and who are in charge of spreading messages. It is in this context that a person in charge of the hill has been appointed to serve as intermediary between those who live in the hill and the rest of the village in a frame of communication for the resolution of difficulties inherent to the social life in the village. If these associations and specific groups assure a communication about child labor and gold washing, it is in an indirect way. We can then assert that at the current moment, there are no specific local level structures of which the activities concern specifically the fighting against child labor in the sites of gold washing, considered as one of the worst forms of child labor (MASSN, on 2011: 5).

#### Get children busy...teachers' strategy

At the level of the school, we try in our own way to retain children in classrooms. Besides the sensitization, we teach the holiday days and even Sundays to get them busy, to maintain them in classrooms. Yes we have a center with footbridge which gets back the alumni to insert them into the school circle. (Boulsam, primary school teacher and Director of the primary school of Tanwaka for five years)

The teachers of the primary school took the commitment to occupy children during the moments there is no school: weekend and holidays. This strategy is due to the fact that in the absence of occupation, children are tempted to find other occupations. When they would have done games and take care with revising the lessons and with making exercises, they find the opportunity to go for looking for money. That is why teachers try retain them longer to the school. Even if this approach allows to occupy the games moments of children which constitutes for them a right, between two troubles, it is better to retain children to the school for their learning, including granting them time for games, than to let them go to the commune, in gold washing sites. In the same way, and to strengthen the structure of their initiative, the teachers set up a center with footbridge, aiming at getting back children who are gold washers and who would like to take back school or who are encouraged to take back school. Beyond the center with footbridge, there is also a strategy of the constant watch which combines a club of supervision in charge of informing the committee of any suspected case, in particular in link with violence against girls. Only, this strategy is centered on the girls and on schooling. It has no direct links with gold washing of children. However, the efficiency or the success of these actions of the constant day watch would contribute to reduce in a drastic way the temptation to let children go towards gold washing. In these conditions, it would be advisable to add other missions to this plan. These new missions would be to assure by a permanent, multi-structure actors and multi-levels constant watches over every information concerning children gold washers. It is at this price that the return of these children in the centers with footbridges would become effective, but also that the departure of new children towards of gold washers sites would decrease

It is at the level of school that there is the implementation of supervision Club made up of pupils in every district. It consists for the club to inform the Committee of listening made up of the Director, APE and AME presidents who deal with violence cases against girls as well in districts, on the road of school and even in the school. Because the issue of girls is sensitive and the violence can make them abandon school. The committee intervenes only in girls cases. Pupils inform us from the districts of any case of violence on girls and the marriage cases at the village level. If are cases, we seize the committee of listening and we convene the concerned to hear them and we sensitive them. (Boulsam, primary school teacher and the school Director of Tanwaka, for 5years.

#### **Discussion : the influence of a communicational approach**

In villages of the rural commune of Boudry, the communication around child labor in the sites of gold washing is embryonic, informal and often indirect. it remains a fact to be defined and of structured. The stakes around the issue are so important as it is necessary to win the bet to assure by a communicational approach the production of speech and their reception in the optics of changing the mentalities and the behavior. For that purpose, it would be important to have processes of communication through which the formalization of multi-actors dialogue frame constitutes a challenge. In these processes, it is necessary to avoid maintaining the hiatus communicational around childhood, without neglecting however the determining role of science in giving key actions

#### Formalize a dialogue frame between actors.

There is no communication frame. We often speak about all this between us in talks but it does not go beyond that. (Malik, responsible of holes, inhabitant of the site and iman of the site, Saturnin, responsible



of hole, Théodore, responsible of hole

In the rural commune of Boudry, the coverage of the problem of child labor in gold washing sites does not take roots in processes of formalized communication. In the survey zone, there are no structures which intervene in a specific way on the phenomenon of child labor in the sites of gold washing. We note the intervention of diverse international organizations and NGOs in the region concerning globally schooling, specifically girls' schooling. The actors who try to invest in make it in a sporadic way or in an indirect way through their classic activities centered on the raising awareness about school, literacy. As peripheral as can be these actions, they contribute a slightest bit to build gradually places of communication which would deserve to be formalized and to be taken care of by actors and directed also and specifically on gold washing of children. In villages, the most appropriated communication channels in this kind of situation remain the direct contact with the actors, through sessions of sensitization: meeting, theater forum, projection of movies followed by debate, discussions, radio programs, field visits. However, these means of communication and the processes which they imply can be effective only if they are determined by a formal structure. The local associations, due to their capacity of social mobilization, should in the discussion with the other actors, contribute to justify the necessity of a dialogue frame at the level of the commune and of every village. This frame should be multi-actors and turned to the production of speech and messages from which the content would serve to discourage all the stakeholders to engage children in the work on the sites of gold washing. It is the research of a participative communication process as communication for the change of mentalities and behavior which is highlighted. What would allow gold washers, workers or persons in charge of holes, parents, teachers, to the decentralized structures of the government, in particular the social action, work, the health, to the local elected representatives, to the community leaders, to the local media, and to the possible social, technical and financial labor, to organize the discussion and to deliberate on the necessity of giving an end to child labor, and one of its worst forms that is gold washing of children. The broadcasting of these speeches and messages should serve as basis of an educational, dissuasive and persuasive communication, but turned towards the necessity of acting in emergency. This dialogue frame should contribute to strengthen the strategy of the teachers which is getting children busy by various means, to prevent them from going to the sites. It has to be the place not necessarily of the questioning of the differences and gaps of the interest between actors, but the research area of compromises which would allow the actors to agree on a minimum.

Gold washing of children constitutes a social problem, and a problem of development as such. The processes to deal with it emphasize sensitization, as much on the misdeeds of this activity for children, as on the importance of school. Actors intervene in a sporadic way, NGOs, political and public administrations there; others try concretely to get organized in long-lasting local structures to help tackling the problem. Every body's approach would deserve to be strengthened and structured by a communicational approach. In this approach, what should be the content of messages?

#### Avoid the communicational hiatus

According to people, it is necessary to emphasize the dangers of gold washing namely the deviations of customs, the effects on the health and the social deviations. In the projections of movies, it is necessary to emphasize the short-lived character of gold washing. One interviewee imagines a scenario. *We could make a movie in which we show the case of two children, the other one having abandoned school to go on the hill in search of gold and return back with a motorcycle. Not long after he loses his motorcycle and he becomes sick and his parents are forced to sell their millet and animals to look after him. And the other who continues and at the end succeeds at school and comes back to support financially the family. In that case, children and the some parents will see and will educate their children so that they see the dangers of gold washing.*

It is necessary to emphasize the dangers of gold washing to dissuade young people. Make projections to show the effects of the drug, the deaths due to the collapses, the prostitution and its consequences and the overexploitation of children on sites. (Boulsam, primary school teacher and Director of the primary school of Tanwaka for five years)

In the speeches, it is necessary to cut and avoid maintaining the communicational hiatus around child labor in gold washing. The argumentation must be precise and centered on the dangers of gold washing in the life of children, and the other way around the interest of school. In other words, the main argument in this process, it is the importance of school for children in their process of socialization and their progressive integration in the society by the work when they would become adults. It is a question of building an argument of authority which would highlight the limits of gold washing in the process of social integration of children.

Knowledge doesn't finished, gold will finish a day. (Dofini, person in charge gold washing site at Tawaka). It is necessary to show to people the importance of school. It is necessary to tell to everybody that gold finishes but not school. Here, it was a big place with bars, restaurants and "maquis" (kind of bar) but it is finished. So, it is a lesson. We saw people who were rich because of gold but it is finished, then it is necessary to everybody understand because all did not see that. (Malik, responsible of holes, inhabitant of the site and iman of the site, Saturnin, responsible of hole, Théodore, responsible of hole)

In the speech of parents, whether it is in centers, or in all-out debates, the phenomenon of gold washing on the school decrease hits the headlines. In the General assemblies of the structures as the APE and the AME, the responsible speak about it. School is a right for children (Universal Declaration of Human Rights). Most of the Constitutions adopted this principle, in the melting pot of the international schedules (we remember the EPT, the OMDS, and today the ODD. School always finds in a central place, and the place of child is there, not in the world of work.

A neglected role: scientific production about the

No, except for you nobody came here to speak to us about the work of pupils on sites. (Group Interview with young people from Talé)

But the problem is not to denounce the misdeeds of our structures or our habits, and even less to dream about the wonderful world which would be ours, if only we were willing to accept the one or the other of the multiple recipes of our intellectual guides. It is necessary to understand and to make change (Crozier, on 1970: 11). It is the capacity of Science to understand the world which constitutes one of its practical utilities. This utility is also highlighted by Favre with the illustrative title of its work *Understand the world to change it. Epistemology of the politics*. If there is communication, it is firstly this type of communication that it involved in the case of gold washing. It is a disinterested communication, but also militant, which consists in realizing surveys with populations, in observing them, in questioning them, and in perturbing their world, but also and especially in arousing in them questioning, in brief, to make them participate in a reflection by the nature of the questions that are asked to them. This type of communication bases on an objective logic and carried towards the production of knowledge on the basis of the way actors interpret their daily life. And this role is not totally known by rural populations. Moreover, very few people evoke it or hints in a direct way at the unveiling role of Science and its impact in the construction of the processes for change. When they evoke the previous surveys, as the one that was realized within the framework of this text, it is often or in a disdainful way for the time that the interveners take and the little answers that it brings over time to their problems of survival, or in a surprising way in the confusion which they usually make between the interviewer, the researcher and the developer. In other words, this major role of science is practically underestimated by the reductionist considerations of the populations, and by the distance which separates generally the production of knowledge and the action, including the decision-making. This role of science in its capacity to reveal to the society the problems which its problems and deserves to be public. That will go through the organization of a scientific communication and the valuation of the scientific information as base or data which would aliment classical writings), but also as support of a specialized writing in this specific domain of the results of communication activities of scientific research. It is the interest of the broadcasting and the valuation of scientific research results that is posed here, as far as these publicized results can allow to support any questioning process of the politics on its decision-making concerning crucial problems of development, including gold washing of the children.

## Conclusion

At the beginning of this research, the objective was to tackle the communication processes in the process of elimination of child labor in gold washing. In these conditions, it is the role that plays communication in this process which becomes the object of the research and the way it gets organized practically on the field. The results of the survey allowed to highlight the stakes in recourse to the communication to organize the care of the question in Burkina Faso. This necessity bases on the fact that gold washing of children constitutes, as much a social problem, as a problem of development. The presence of children in gold washing sites bases on several explanations among which the imitation, the poverty, but also the opportunity. The opportunity for the parents and the owners of the traditional sites of gold extraction to exploit a childish and cheap labor. Nevertheless, the consequences of gold washing on the childhood are as big as the silence would become guilty regarding an already worrisome situation. If the responsibilities about gold washing of children are situated, at least they are shared between most of the local actors, including the government considering its laxity in the application of texts forbidding the implication of children in the dangerous works. Only, at the local level, in spite of the knowledge of the risks connected to child labor on the sites of gold washing, the populations, the children including operate arbitrations in a kind of calculation cost-profit which lead them to accept silently the presence of children on sites. What shows that the actors are conscious of their interests and their representations of school enters in competition with the immediate profits which they hope to fire of child labor in gold washing. This kind of arbitration translates a kind of communicational hiatus, otherwise a dialogue of the deaf between clashing speeches about childhood and about its place in the society. For the care, there are processes of communication, but which remain embryonic and not formalized. They are the fact of a diversity of actors, but who most of the time concentrates on other problematic than gold washing of children. This indirect communication has the disadvantage of not allowing to set in motion all the local opportunities of communication, regarding tools, regarding actors, regarding context and regarding devices to make a success of the bet of the elimination of this way of worse child labor. The impact of a communicational approach in the

management of the issue will depend on the capacity of actors to formalize a multi-actors dialogue frame to determine them to act together to define for the community a common objective around childhood. This dialogue frame would become the locomotive of the production and the broadcasting of speech and messages making sense for the society and directed to the progressive elimination of child labor as such. The role of Science in its capacity to organize an old constant by data production on the society has to be mobilized to give meaning to any dynamism of community organization based on the effective knowledge of the existing, and to favor the possibility of questioning of the politics for decision making.

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